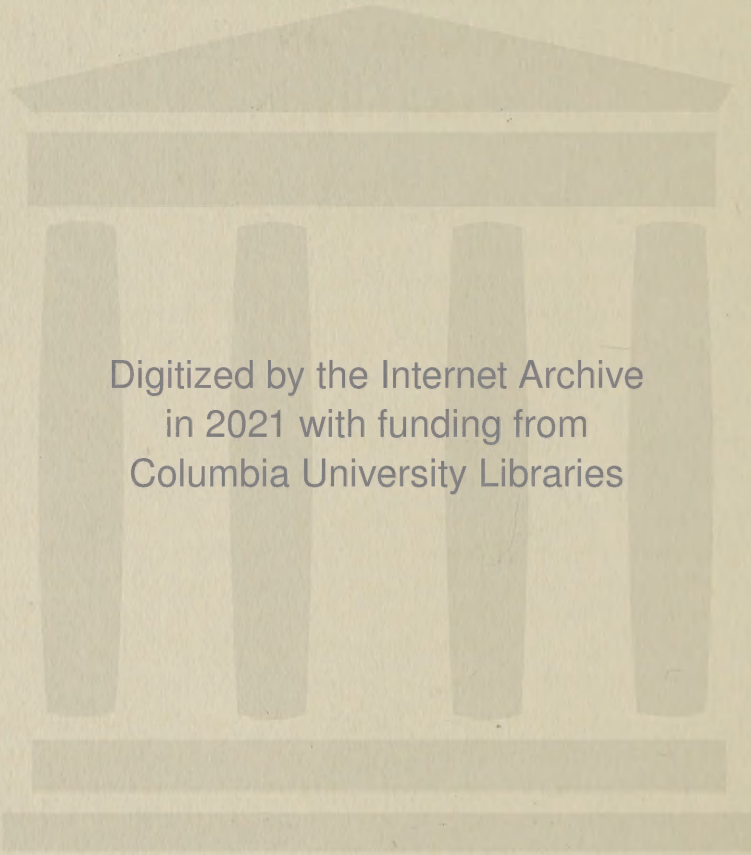


**THE JUBILEE OF THE
YOUNG WOMENS CHRISTIAN
ASSOCIATION**

1866-1916

**NATIONAL BOARD
OF THE YOUNG WOMENS CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATIONS
OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
600 LEXINGTON AVENUE
NEW YORK CITY**

1917



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THE JUBILEE OF THE YOUNG WOMEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION

1866-1916



UT on the Pacific Coast in the Spring days of 1915 there came to some of the delegates at the National Convention a desire for some great "family party" of the Young Women's Christian Association members in the United States. It was spoken of as a simultaneous event when members in student and city and country Associations should learn about each others work, and the same sort of things which our fellow members in the World's Young Women's Christian Association family were doing, a time of information with a chance to make a free will offering to bring still better things to pass.

The Convention ceased, and the delegates left Los Angeles. Many journeyed northward to Asilomar near Monterey where the employed officers were to meet for several days on the newly acquired Conference site, to walk by day beneath the tall pine trees, and to sleep by night beneath roofs made of other odorous cedars, roofs which had hardly ceased to resound to the blow of the hammer.

Here it was recalled that in the spring of 1866 the first Young Women's Christian Association in the United States came into existence and that 1916 would be the jubilee anniversary of the movement. Like flint and steel the "every member" idea and the "fiftieth anniversary" idea came together and there flamed up the thought of

THE EVERY MEMBER'S JUBILEE

One member of the National Board contributed a text:

"Ye shall hallow the fiftieth year and proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof," and another took up again her favorite "Pilgrims Progress" and furnished a motto:

"Here one may be thinking what he is, whence he came, what he has done, and to what the King has called him."

February first to March third were fixed as the dates of the celebration and nearly a thousand Young Women's Christian Associations set to work to observe it in the way that meant most to them, because the significance of the occasion was visible to all.

*Fifty Years of Association Work among Young Women
in the United States of America.*

This Is What the Jubilee Celebrated

THE PIONEER DAYS

A Sunday and a weekday were devoted to the pioneers of the local Associations. "Our Heritage" was the most frequent theme of the Vesper Service, and "Reminiscences" of the social gathering. Some of the speakers were listed as "the first president," "the president Emeritus," "all the presidents," "daughter of the founder," "pioneer members," "charter members," etc. Most of the Associations compiled their own history for the occasion and one initial sentence was sure to be "a small group of women gathered for prayer." Ladies told of the first meeting over which they had presided, the first sewing class they had taught, the first articles of furnishing they had solicited. Some of these Associations measured nearly a half century of history and few of their founders could be present. Flowers or a pencilled

message were their only possible greeting. Other pioneers were present in person and spoke, or led in prayer. Sometimes costumes dating "before the war" were brought out and worn with great effect and their wearers sang "Long, Long Ago," "Ben Bolt," or "Auld Lang Syne."

None of the audiences who heard the seventy-six pioneer programs dared to think of these women, or their work as "antiquated." They realized that more than two score years ago the pioneers had seen a vision to which they had not been disobedient and that they had made innovations, attempted measures unheard of in their day, which measures following generations have accepted as common-place and which innovations the twentieth century claims as its rights. The women of 1866 to 1886 bridged chasms just as wide and deep as those that appall us today, but a greater faith was required of them than would be required for the same undertaking today when countless experiences have proved woman's capacity in cooperation and administration.

Courageous Beginnings
This Is What the Pioneer Days Commemorated

THE PAGEANT

Study of the early days showed how city after city presented such new industrial and religious situations to its young women that no existing means could meet them and a new type of movement was required. To picture these conditions to the Association members and friends of 1916 seemed the province of an Historical Pageant, such as had taken its part in the great Jubilee of the Woman's Missionary Societies in 1911, and in the anniversaries of colleges and towns and counties; such as had thrilled our own Biennial Convention at Richmond in 1913 when the Ministering of the Gift was first por-

trayed to be taken up by Associations in every part of the country. But this Jubilee Pageant was simpler than many of its predecessors, in order to make it usable in the large and small Associations. It was called "Girls of Yesterday and Today—Historical Pictures of Association Life" and was presented less or more elaborately by sixty-nine cities and twenty-six student Associations where 72,198 people saw the story grow before their eyes.

There were only two speakers, a girl of 1866 and a girl of 1916, and before them passed in review girls looking for a place to live, girls taking home parcels from tailoring and dressmaking establishments, office employees and school teachers, a governess with a child clinging to her, factory and mill workers. Linking this prologue to the first pantomimic scene was the Jubilee Hymn, the music of which ran through the Pageant and, in fact, through the whole Jubilee:

*"God is working his purpose out as year succeeds
to year:*

*God is working his purpose out and the time is
drawing near—*

*Nearer and nearer draws the time, the time that
shall surely be,*

*When the earth shall be filled with the glory of God,
as the waters cover the sea."*

There followed a scene in a private house in any New England city, where a group of women, inspired by work already begun in England and in Boston, came together and organized a Young Women's Christian Association. Their courage would have failed had not two girls, strangers to the city, come for help even while they were facing their difficulties.

Then to the music of each decade came in the Procession of the Years, the girls among whom the Associations was finding its way,

1866-1876 city people, 1876-1886 country girls also, 1886-1896 college students who met in the first summer conferences, and Hindu women, to indicate the extension of American Association work into India, 1896-1906 industrial members who came in large numbers, and 1906-1916 "New Americans" from many foreign lands. and a group representing the younger members.

*"What can we do to work God's work. to prosper and increase
The brotherhood of all mankind. the reign of the Prince of Peace?"*

This was answered in the Present Day scene when girls older and younger, native and foreign born, from city, country and college revealed some of the varied activities of the modern Associations—Bible study, eight week clubs, outings, cooking classes, gymnasium drill, life in an Association residence, centering in the welcome of a large group of young women from lands where there is World Fellowship through the World's Young Women's Christian Association. Fellowship began even in the preparation of the Pageant for every participant in it was a local member, who learned more of what her Association was meant to do as she rummaged attics for old fashioned gowns and furniture or visualized the existence of the other pageant groups, perhaps not known in her own home community, but evidently a part of the "real Young Women's Christian Association." Recognition of what people in previous decades had done was brought home to all who saw the Pageant, and those who sang the Jubilee hymn realized that there was still Another cooperating with the Girls of Yesterday and Today, for

*"All we can do is nothing worth unless God blesses
the deed
Vainly we hope for the harvest, till God gives life
to the seed."*

*New Undertakings to Meet New Responsibilities
This Is What the Pageant Signified.*

THE MEMBERS RALLIES AND BANQUETS

Although Tuesday, February first, had been recommended as an occasion for a "Membership Rally" under the direction of the "Membership Committee," 228 cities and 54 student Associations made it the opportunity for a great Love Feast of the membership and as many friends as could find places in the banquet rooms. What the county Associations lacked in numbers they made up in vigor and fire, and fire of some sort was surely needed that month, since one North Dakota gathering assembled when the outside temperature registered fifty-four degrees below zero!

Everybody wanted to come. Conservative Associations had to "move out" from their plans of a dinner in the Association dining room and engage banquet halls in hotels which were taxed in all their resources to serve the guests. Other Associations stopped selling tickets several days beforehand. Gold and blue decorations blazed above the tables, artistic and symbolic candle shades graced the board, both simple and ornate gowns were in evidence, and the music of occasional orchestras was drowned in the singing,

"How do you do Mrs..... How do you do!

Is there anything that we can do for you?

We'll help you all we can,

We'll stand by you like a man;

How do you do Mrs..... How do you do!"

Ex-president Roosevelt in New York City, Ex-president Taft in New Haven, hundreds of other less known speakers, visiting members of the National Board, and field committees who toured the country, local dignitaries such as the president of the Association and the head cook of the Association cafeteria, all were sung to and cheered.

Some people never knew they could sing and some never knew they wanted to sing until they were swept along by these joyful out-

bursts, and found they were singing. And more than one substantial business man who had often expressed his wonder that his wife should "spend so much time down at that Y. W. C. A." understood it, as he saw her sitting at the head of a family of 2,000 on the gala night, or rising with flushed cheeks to deprecate an acclaim of bad poetry and good melody, in

*"Mrs. we love you,
Mrs., so dear.
If you think we don't love you,
What a foolish idea."*

Some of the pleasantest functions were enjoyed by groups which had not met before in similar ways; employers and their wives, foremen and forewomen and factory nurses attended the industrial club banquets, a maids' club entertained the board of directors.

Such gatherings could be brought together only by some unifying purpose. It did not need the singing of

*"Blest be the tie that binds
Our hearts in Christian love"* to make this plain, for every member realized this acceptable democracy.

All are One in Christ Jesus.

This Is What the Members' Rallies Emphasized.

THE GIRLS' CELEBRATIONS

While the reason for having any Jubilee was, of course, the work of the Pioneers which came instinctively to the front whenever Jubilee was mentioned, yet most of the Associations realized in these anniversary days that its girl members are, after all, their greatest cause for rejoicing.

"Our Pioneers are most of them Freshmen in College," wrote the secretary of a new county Association. But some thousands of girls were still at home as was seen by the girls' celebrations of the Jubilee month. Their special vesper service announcements often sounded so attractive that a line had to be added, "Main floor reserved for girls under eighteen."

These mass meetings and "spreads" were not "for children by their elders," but they were arranged and carried out by teen age girls. A sixteen year old leader presided over the largest vesper service one city had ever known. Eight of the younger girls told the church people one Sunday how the Young Womens Christian Association co-operated and supplemented what church and Sunday school were doing, young violinists and pianists and readers and singers offered programs which delighted the guests of honor who felt that they could begin to lay down some of the heavy burdens long carried, since there was a host coming who were learning to carry their own burdens.

*The Young Womens Christian Association Belongs to the Girls
This Is What the Girls Celebrations Declared*

THE VESPER SERVICES

Whole hearted re-commitment to the fundamental religious purpose of the Young Women's Christian Association was the accepted function of the Jubilee. Months in advance the working forces began to study "The Meaning of Prayer" and kindred manuals of devotion, and to call attention to the "untouched resources in Jesus Christ," which made possible a great advance for the future years.

Because the late Sunday afternoon hours have been reserved for the main religious meeting in many Associations the term Vesper

Service has come to stand for the many lesser religious features as well. Most of the city and county Associations held to the suggested topics "Our Heritage," "Our Companionship," "Our Privilege," "The Source of Our Power," and many student Associations united in their suggested themes "Then and Now," "Women Working Together all Round the World," "The New Democracy—What is Christian Service," "A Working Religion—The Challenge of To-day."

Daily Bible Readings on personal resolutions leading to decisions were widely used either in the quiet hour that begins the day or in little dormitory or cabinet groups for study, very frequently at family prayers in the Association residence. One fine Vesper Service was led by a Jewish girl who came to America fifteen years ago in the steerage, another by one of the foremost women speakers in America with 4,000 people in her audience, many new Bible classes were begun for women in every rank and condition of life. A little Russian girl said to be the secretary who had spoken on "*Create in me a clean heart, O God,*" "That was very beautiful what you said 'Create in me a clean heart, O God,' but we forget." There were large services and small services, earnest after meetings in which girls began the Christian life, and intimate meetings of Christian fellowship where they learned to pray together. From reports received there was an attendance of 132,451 at 1,263 religious meetings.

Several Associations conducted evangelistic services during part of the Jubilee month. There had been at first a proposition for some widely concerted action of this kind, but the plan seemed to be too large to be adjusted into the Jubilee schedule and was finally carried as a supplementary effort in November and December. This was a series of Winter Conferences in nineteen city Associations in eight of

the eleven fields, in which members registered as in the Summer Conferences for classes on Christian Fundamentals and Personal Evangelism, for a course of evangelistic addresses and a World Fellowship Meeting. These Winter Conferences are acknowledged as one part of the Jubilee that brought Jesus Christ and his interpretation of our lives to thousands of women and girls so powerfully and so permanently that they will hold a fixed place in the Association calendar.

The Young Women's Christian Association is a Movement Which Recognizes Christ Jesus as its Leader.

This Is What the Vesper Services Reiterated

THE MEMORIAL ENDOWMENT

Nearly all Jubilee and Centenary Celebrations have condensed the overflowing spirit of congratulations and amiable prophecy into some solid enduring monument. It was not hard to decide what this should be in the American Young Women's Christian Association Jubilee, for only a few months before the "Every Member Campaign" was projected, God had called home in the afternoon of her days Miss Grace H. Dodge, of New York City, the first and only president the National Board of the Young Women's Christian Association of the United States of America had ever known; and it was deemed fitting that on Friday, March 3rd, the actual fiftieth anniversary of the first use of the name Young Women's Christian Association in this country, every member of the organization and every friend of Christian work among young women and girls might have the opportunity to make a voluntary offering to perpetuate the work to which Miss Dodge had given herself without reserve for the last ten years, and to which her last will and testament had assigned the sum of half a million dollars.

The Jubilee records show 16,000 pledges made from Associations in all of the eleven fields. The smallest stated gift was the sum of four cents; the largest was \$500,000, and by the time of the next annual meeting one million dollars had been contributed.

Gratitude for a Leader of Girls Who Had Been Endowed with Creative Faith.

This Is What the Memorial Endowment Showed

WHAT WENT INTO THE JUBILEE

At national headquarters weeks of committee meetings in which workers from all over the country took part; preparation of printed matter ranging all the way from a history "Fifty Years of Association Work among Young Women" which had been several years in preparation, down to simple blue pennants:

1,812,650 pieces of free literature were sent out,
331,644 pieces of printed matter, for which a price was charged,
83,084 pages of multigraphed material,
108,000 buttons,
1,444 pennants.

The field committees were busy making up schedules for the official visitors, both volunteer and secretarial. Ninety of the ninety-five Associations in one field were covered in this way. In another field a Flying Squadron held four week-end conferences, in points accessible to nearly all the Associations, and here they had Pageant and Banquet and Vesper Service, and all the other integral elements of the Jubilee program with audiences of a thousand.

The local Associations—for nearly all observed some of the proposed features except one or two which languished and wished to die in peace without interruption by an official visitor—put into the Jubilee the hardest of all hard work, steady giving out of information, enlisting help, doing impossible things, snatching victory from defeat until fatigue almost blunted perception of values. It was a month of opening doors, of sending for more chairs, of telling to new ears what a Young Women's Christian Association was, of showing the building and activities, and of explaining to friends and parents what was the constraining force which had brought the girls they knew to the building or rooms and into membership.

WHAT CAME OUT OF THE JUBILEE

People know what the young womanhood of these United States is in this Twentieth Century, where these girls were born, how they occupy themselves, what they think and believe. People know how the Young Womens Christian Association came into existence, not a social institution but a religious movement, and they understand its obligations to young women of other lands than our own.

The Association publicity posters and placards told some people of this; the pageants and programs told more; the daily press, the leading periodicals of religious and social progress announced this; college papers and sorority magazines spread the word; and our friends, the pastors of thousands of churches, told their own congregations or special audiences that they believed this Young Women's Christian Association had come to the Kingdom for such a time as this. In one cathedral service the Dean preached on the text, "Am I my brother's keeper," and remarked during the sermon, "The Young Women's Christian Association is a handmaid of the church, doing what the church unassisted often would be unable to accomplish. It is a force for unity, enabling * * * * denominations to appreciate the possibility of uniting on a religious program. The Association is a force for co-operation, turning class consciousness into social consciousness. It is wholly voluntary in organization. Primarily a preventive rather than a remedial institution, it is a school of life for the development of Christian character."

Inside the Associations old and new members—of whom there were literally thousands during the Jubilee month—recommitted themselves to the main religious purpose; or for the first time declared allegiance to Jesus Christ; the world sisterhood seemed to mean more than ever before. All this was evidenced by the months succeeding the actual celebration.

Perhaps the multitudinous reactions of 340,000 members, 971 Associations, may be summed up in this way:

THE JUBILEE BROUGHT

REVERENCE FOR THE PAST
CO-OPERATION FOR THE PRESENT
COURAGE FOR THE FUTURE
A FORWARD MARCH TOWARD THE GREAT
OBJECTIVE

"TO BRING YOUNG WOMEN TO SUCH A KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST AS SAVIOUR AND LORD, AS SHALL MEAN FOR THE INDIVIDUAL YOUNG WOMAN FULLNESS OF LIFE AND DEVELOPMENT OF CHARACTER, AND SHALL MAKE THE ORGANIZATION AS A WHOLE AN EFFECTIVE AGENCY IN THE BRINGING IN OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD AMONG YOUNG WOMEN."

Department of Method
City Committee
Town and Country Committee
Student Committee
Department of Field Work
Foreign Department
Department of Conventions & Conferences
Secretarial Department
Publication Department
Finance Department
Office Department

NATIONAL BOARD
of
The Young Womens Christian Associations
of the United States of America
600 Lexington Avenue
New York City

Telephone Plaza 6000-1-2
Cable Address Outpost New York

Miss Mabel Cratty *General Secretary*

Mrs Robert E Speer *President*
Mrs John French *Chairman*
Executive Committee
Mrs James S Cushman *First Vice President*
Mrs William W Rossiter
Second Vice President
Mrs Thomas S Gladding *Secretary*
Mrs Samuel J Broadwell *Treasurer*

April 3, 1917

Bible House
New York

Gentlemen:

At this time there is being sent you a report of the Young Womens Christian Association Jubilee recently celebrated throughout the American Associations. In view of the fact that most religious organizations have included a collection of funds in their program for Jubilee and Centenary celebrations, interest may attach to the statement on page 13 that a Memorial Endowment Fund of One Million Dollars was gathered in connection with the Young Womens Christian Association Jubilee to commemorate the work of Miss Grace H. Dodge, the first president of the National Board. This is a part of the permanent endowment fund which the National Board is endeavoring to raise and which still totals less than is needed as a financial foundation by a movement of this character if it is to prosecute a vigorous work among the 10,000,000 young women of the United States, many groups of whom can not as yet be included in the Association program.

Announcement made through the secular papers of Mr. John D. Rockefeller's gift of \$500,000 to this Memorial Endowment, led the public to believe that the National Board had completed its necessary endowment fund, which is far from being the case. As the home base is more adequately endowed the American Associations can extend their work in those foreign countries where the magnificent achievements of the Young Mens Christian Association call persistently for a corresponding advance by the woman's movement.

Very truly,

Elizabeth Wilson

EW

Executive, Secretarial Department

